

CALFED OPERATIONS COORDINATION GROUP
MEETING NOTES AND ACTION ITEMS
February 19, 2003

Announcements

Review of December 18 and January 29 meeting notes

No comments.

Handouts

- 1) DRAFT (b)(2) Accounting, Water Year 2003 – 90% and 50% tables, dated February 19, 2003; Paul Fujitani, USBR.
- 2) CALFED OPS GROUP Operations Briefing Package, dated February 19, 2003; John Leahigh, DWR.

SWRCB Activities

Update on SWRCB activities

- Phase 8 of the Bay-Delta water rights hearing was dismissed as of January 31, 2003. The Projects can initiate a proceeding to address Phase 8 issues at any time, but this would now require a new CEQA document and an entirely new hearing record.
- Comments were received from nine parties on the proposed transfer of up to 80,710 acre-feet of water from Sacramento River diverters to Metropolitan Water District. The parties commenting include the following: South Delta Water Agency, County of Tuolumne, California Sportfishing Protection Alliance, Department of Fish and Game, Sacramento Groundwater Authority, San Luis and Delta-Mendota Water Authority, County of Yolo, US Department of Interior, and Department of Water Resources.
- The Term 91 compliance hearing is scheduled for February 25 – 26. There is likely to be rebuttal testimony, so more dates may be necessary.
- The letter regarding the VAMP refill criteria was sent out on February 14. At issue was an alleged violation of conditions imposed by D-1641 on the water rights licenses of Merced Irrigation District and the Modesto and Turlock Irrigation Districts, requiring the Districts to forego refilling their reservoirs to recover water the Districts have released or foregone pursuant to the SJRA when the Bureau is making releases from New Melones Reservoir to maintain water quality objectives at Vernalis.
- A letter from Reclamation regarding violation of the Vernalis flow objective in 2002 is under review and expected to be sent shortly.
- The SWRCB adopted Order WRO 2002-13 on December 20, 2002. The order approves the transfer of water from Imperial Irrigation District to San Diego County Water Authority and denies petitions for reconsideration. There were no substantive changes made based on the comments received. Negotiations are ongoing, however, the transfer has not yet been approved by the IID Board. The Board was sued by the local Air Districts and by Imperial County. The litigation has been stayed pending resolution of the Quantification Settlement Agreement negotiations.

On-Going Activities Related to the Ops Group

Status of Response Plans

The three Response Plans for Joint Point of Diversion are:

- Water Level Response Plan – A meeting is scheduled with the South Delta Water Agency.
- Fishery Protection Plan – It is being drafted and is expected to be finalized by next month.
- Water Quality Response Plan – A draft is being shared with Contra Costa Water District.

Status of DOI's (B)(2) Policy

Comments have been received and are being identified. Responses are being drafted. No completion date has been set - possibly in the next month or two.

Status of (B)(2) Accounting

The two draft B2 Accounting handouts (90% & 50%) for water year 2003 were discussed. The March hydrology will cause the table values to change again. No Roe Island or Vernalis costs are included in the tables.

Fishery Status

The agencies are already in consultation because the reconsultation level was triggered for some of the Late Fall Run hatchery release groups.

DFG, NMFS, and FWS are discussing the pros and cons of moving the VAMP period forward or backward.

Status of Sacramento River Monitoring

Upstream monitoring shows not much movement of juveniles.

Steelhead, Winter-Run and Spring-Run Chinook Salmon

Plot of observed Chinook salvage at the SWP and CVP facilities for the 8/1/02 to 2/17/03 period was posted and discussed. Red and yellow light values have been established.

DFG has a winter run escapement estimate for 2002; 7,337 escapement and 5,745 females. The new take value is over 40,000; 3,000 have been taken so far at the facilities.

The steelhead counts are well under the take limit.

Splittail

Nothing to report in this section.

Delta Smelt

There were no problems with Delta smelt. The 14-day-running average is 58 and the daily values are between 24 and 60.

Kodiak trawls begin this week, which will give better idea of fish distribution.

Work Group Activities

OFF Update

No meetings have been held.

DAT Update

Weekly conference calls are being held.

Operations Status

CVP/SWP Operations Status/Delta Operations Criteria/2003 Operations Plan

The CALFED Ops Group Operations Briefing package was discussed. Port Chicago was triggered. Only 2.5 inches of precipitation so far this month, 1/3 of normal. Weather projections are dry for the rest of February. San Luis will fill, at best, around the second week of March. March is the last good chance for addition rainfall. The Vernalis flow requirement is 2280 cfs monthly average.

EWA Operations

The February portion of the EWA table is still being worked out.

Action Items

Delta Cross Channel Gate Experiment

Next two meetings are scheduled for the room 1131 in the Resources Building.